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UNCLAS BRATISLAVA 000989

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR PM/DTCC - BLUE LANTERN COORDINATOR
VIENNA FOR DHS ATTACHE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL LO

SUBJECT: BLUE LANTERN REPLY TO STATE 225891

REF: STATE 225891

Per reftel, emboffs October 27 visited Vel'koobchod-Zbrane ("Wholesale Weapons") Spol S.R.O. Replies to tasked questions follow:

-- Vel'koobchod-Zbrane Spol S.R.O. is a licensed, legitimate firearms retailer in Slovakia.

-- The company has been in business since 1991.

-- The wholesale arm of the company supplies firearms to Slovak firearm retailers. The firm also has four retail locations in Slovakia (Nitra, Bratislava, Dubica, and Kosice).

-- The company is looking to purchase approximately 100 weapons from Marlin Firearms and all 189 weapons from Smith and Wesson.

-- They expect to sell half of the weapons within three months. They have requested a selection of firearm models to show to their customers. They plan to order more of the popular models based upon customer demand.

-- The company is requesting a large quantity, because it is the largest firearm wholesaler in Slovakia. They previously purchased American firearms through German intermediaries (Hoffmann in Mellrichstadt and Frankonia in Rottendorf). With rising wages and standard of living in Slovakia, they expect consumer demand for quality firearms to increase. They plan to replace much of their Russian firearm stock with American firearms.

-- Frantisek Babuska, Chief, Sensitive Goods Department, Ministry of Economy, told emboff Vel'koobchod-Zbrane is a well-known company with legitimate firearm licenses.

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